

Horticulture Tips

September 2004

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service
Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources
Oklahoma State University

GARDEN TIPS FOR SEPTEMBER!

David Hillock

Landscape

- Watch for fall specials at garden centers and nurseries since fall is a great time for planting many ornamentals.
- Choose spring flowering bulbs as soon as available.
- Plant cool-season annuals like pansies, ornamental cabbage or kale, snapdragons and dusty miller when temperatures begin to cool.
- You have all of September to plant cool-season vegetables like spinach, leaf lettuce, mustard and radishes, and until the middle of September to plant rutabagas, Swiss chard, garlic and turnips.
- Watch for and control any late infestations of tree webworms.
- Twig girdler insects should be controlled if large numbers of small branches of elms, pecans, or persimmons are uniformly girdled from the tree and fall to the ground.
- Begin to reduce the amount of light on outside tropical houseplants by placing them under shade trees before bringing them indoors for the winter.

Lawn

- Last nitrogen fertilizer application of the year on warm-season grasses should be applied no later than September 15. (F-6420)
- Winter broadleaf weeds like dandelion will begin to emerge in late September, which is also the best time to control them with a 2,4-D type herbicide.
- If preemergent control of winter annual weeds (henbit, chickweed, annual bluegrass, etc.) is desired in lawns, the application should be completed by the 2nd week of September. (F-6421) *Note: Do not treat areas that will be seeded in the fall.*
- Continue bermudagrass spray program with glyphosate products for areas being converted over to tall fescue this fall. (F-6421)
- Plan to seed bluegrass, fescue or ryegrass as needed in shady areas in mid- to late-September. Fall is the best time to establish cool-season lawns. (F-6419)
- White grub damage can become visible this month. Apply appropriate soil insecticide if white grubs are a problem. Water product into soil. (F-7306)

Ten Tips to Save Money and Protect the Environment While Enjoying a Healthy Yard

David Hillock

1. **KNOW YOUR YARD** – Learn about the soils, plants, climate and wildlife around your home.
2. **CHOOSE THE RIGHT PLANT FOR THE RIGHT SPOT** – Avoid invasive species. Know the requirements and ultimate size of the plant. Select species that require less water, fertilizer, pruning and pesticides.
3. **BE WATER WISE** – Water lawn only when needed but to the depth of the root zone, cover bare soil with mulch, use drip irrigation for trees and shrubs, consider reducing turf with high irrigation needs with drought tolerant grass species or ground covers.
4. **KNOW YOUR PEST** – Make sure the pest is correctly identified and use the most appropriate method to control the problem; contact local cooperative extension service for help.
5. **READ THE LABEL, FOLLOW THE LABEL** – Before using pesticides or fertilizers, know the do's and don'ts. The label is the law. Keep children and pets away from pesticides. Store and dispose of pesticides properly.
6. **GO NATURAL** – Create wildlife habitat at home; protect and plant non-invasive plants.
7. **PILE IT ON** – Build a compost pile with grass clippings, leaves and other organic material to create mulch and a more healthy soil.
8. **TAKE IT TO THE MAX** – Mow your lawn at the highest recommended setting and leave clippings in place.
9. **PREVENT POLLUTION POSSIBILITIES** – Prevent fertilizer, pesticides, yard debris and pet waste from entering water sources of waste water systems. Use pesticides only when and where they are needed.
10. **RESPECT YOUR NEIGHBORS** – Regardless of whether you have a traditional lawn or a more naturalized landscape keep your yard safe, clean and well maintained to add beauty to your neighborhood.

Twig Girdlers

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It is not uncommon to find small twigs lying around the yard this time of year. You may also see twigs loosely attached or lodged in the canopy of trees. This is usually an indication that twig girdlers, long-horned borers, have been actively working on your trees. Twigs look as if someone whittled the end that was attached to the tree.

Adult twig girdlers will girdle the branches before laying eggs in the twig. Apparently the larvae cannot survive in live wood. These twigs usually break off and fall to the ground or get lodged in the canopy. Larvae overwinter in the dead twig either in the tree or on the ground becoming active again in spring. Eventually they pupate, emerge as adults during August and September and then start the process all over again.

Generally twig girdler damage is not detrimental to a tree, but can result in reduced production in pecans as well as affect the beauty and aesthetic quality of ornamental trees. Besides pecan, twig girdlers are commonly found on hickory, persimmon and elm. They also attack oaks, honeylocust, hackberry, poplar, dogwood, sourwood and various fruit trees.

Insecticide treatment is usually not necessary unless there are heavy infestations that will affect fruit or nut production. The best approach for control is gathering and destroying the severed twigs during the fall, winter and spring.

Plant Profile - Caladiums for the Sun

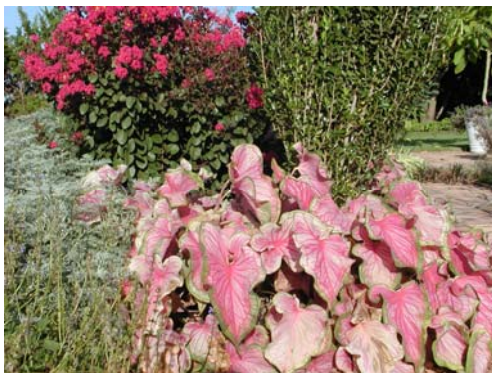
David Hillock

Caladiums are excellent plants for southern gardens. They are grown for their large, heart-shaped leaves with bright colors and patterns. The leaves can be variegated with red, rose, salmon, white or green. With years of hybridizing there are now various types available in addition to the common Fancy Leaf types. These newer types include Strap Leaf, Lance Leaf and Dwarf.

Caladium grows best in fertile, organic soil that is well-drained. They need abundant water during the growing season and often perform poorly in areas of low humidity. In Oklahoma, most cultivars prefer protection from our late, hot, afternoon sun and grow best in partial shade. However, two varieties, Florida Sweetheart and White Wings, which were grown in the patio garden at *Oklahoma Gardening* are full sun cultivars and held up very well to the summer sun and heat this year. Florida Sweetheart is a Strap or Lance Leaf Caladium with red/pink leaves with green edges. White Wing is bright white with narrow green margins.

Caladiums are tender perennials and should be dug in the fall and stored dry for the winter. The tubers are planted in spring after danger of frost is past.

Florida Sweetheart



White Wings



Books for the Gardener

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Landscaping for Wildlife: A Guide to the Southern Great Plains

Late last year a new book was released on Landscaping for Wildlife written by Jeremy D. Garrett in association with the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation. The book provides beginners and experts alike with specific, detailed, yet easy-to-follow instructions for meeting water needs, feeding preferences and nesting requirements of the wildlife found in the Southern Great Plains. The book includes detailed diagrams that will help you inventory and wildscape your own property, and a woodworking section with patterns of nesting and feeding stations designed for individual wildlife species.

Through careful landscaping, you can make your property a year-round way station for a wide variety of animal species, from birds, butterflies and squirrels to bats, turtles and opossums. Landscaping for Wildlife is available for \$24.00 (includes S&H) through the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation (<http://www.wildlifedepartment.com/>).

Ecology for Gardeners

Even a small garden is a miniature ecosystem. It includes a surprising diversity of organisms that interact in countless ways. Some of the organisms are permanent residents; others come and go in search of a meal or a mate. An insect feeding on garden plants is simultaneously hunted by predators and weakened by parasites; it competes with other herbivores for choice food plants; it is hindered in its feeding by the plants' chemical and physical defenses; and it challenges other members of its species for the best mates and locations for egg-laying. Gardens are exciting places for those willing to get down on their hands and knees and look closely! Authors and ecologists Steve Carroll and Steve Salt argue that the more completely we understand these interactions, the better gardeners we become.

In Ecology for Gardeners, the authors begin by looking at the structure, development and genetics of plants. They then discuss other garden inhabitants, focusing on those with the most influential roles, including insects, mammals and microorganisms. The authors explore the importance of nutrient cycles, water, soil and air--that is, the physical environment within which garden organisms live. They then examine in detail the many ways in which organisms interact, from the mutually harmful (competition) to those that are one-sided (e.g., herbivore) to the mutually beneficial (mutualism).

Once this groundwork is laid, they introduce humans to the garden, considering how gardeners can adopt ecological principles to wisely manage their garden ecosystems. Throughout the book, the authors cite hundreds of examples drawn from personal experience and from the gardening and ecological literature. In the end, it becomes clear that gardens--whether a group of potted plants on a patio, a few beds carved out of a lawn or extensive plantings over several acres--are connected to the natural world in endless and important ways.

Steve Carroll, whose Ph.D. is in botany, is a Master Gardener and an ecologist at Truman State University in Kirksville, Missouri, where he teaches ecology, botany and other classes. He is particularly interested in gardening with native prairie plants, problems posed by invasive

species and pollination biology. Steve Salt, whose Ph.D. is in biochemistry and microbiology, teaches a variety of college and university classes. He and his family own Green Valley Farm where they raise vegetables, herbs, small fruits and flowers which they sell by subscription and at farmers' markets.

Regional Food Bank Hosts OKC Beautiful September "Basic Training" Workshop—"Edible Gardening"!

David Hillock

OKC Beautiful offers "Basic Training" workshops throughout the year that are FREE and OPEN TO THE PUBLIC! These wonderful workshops are taught by local professionals and geared toward helping people work smarter, not harder in their public green spaces or private gardens. The September guest speaker is Chris Kirby, Director of the Regional Food Bank's Urban Harvest Program. Ms. Kirby will be discussing "**Edible Gardening**" on **Saturday, September 25 from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. at the Regional Food Bank, 3355 S. Purdue.** If you or your group are interested in attending this workshop -- **ENROLLMENT IS EASY! -- Just call the OKC Beautiful Office at 405-525-8822 by Monday, September 20 and tell us you wish to sign up.** Space is limited, so enroll today!

OKC Beautiful's quarterly "Basic Training" workshops are aimed at giving helpful, basic, no-nonsense advice to people maintaining public beautification projects. Our goal is to help people work smarter and more efficiently and give the latest tips on everything from more efficient litter control tactics to the best low-maintenance plants as well as more specialized topics. This fun and informative workshop is made possible through a generous grant from the Oklahoma City Community Foundation, with assistance from Neighborhood Alliance and the OKC Parks and Recreation Department.

Master Gardener Corner

David Hillock

2005 State Master Gardener Continued Training Conference

Plans are already taking place for the 2005 State Master Gardener Continued Training Conference to be held in Weatherford on **Friday, June 10, 2005.** The **Custer County Master Gardeners** will host the conference and are already enthusiastically making plans. Stay tuned for more details! Be sure to mark your calendars now and we hope to see you all in June 2005!

Kay County Master Gardeners Make Bird Feeder Kits for County Fair

With anticipation that some 651 grade school children will attend the Kay County Fair, the **Kay County Master Gardeners** are making about 800 Bird Feeder kits (pine cones, peanut butter, bailing twine, and bird seed). These kits will be given to the grade school children as well as other youth that attend the fair.

Wayne and Shirley Foxworthy put seed in 643 sandwich bags and **Linda Heitz** will get the rest of the seed and bags. **Mary Ruth Leatherman** is providing the bailing twine. Trash bags with 25 kits and their instructions will be given to the teachers. Single kits with different instructions will be available for kids that just come by. **United Supermarket** provided 48 jars of peanut butter.

Upcoming Horticulture Events

Multi-State Plant Materials Conference

September 22-23, 2004

Holiday Inn, Stillwater

Nursery/Greenhouse Trade Show and Convention

October 7-9, 2004

Cox Convention Center, Oklahoma City

For more information, contact Wendy Gerdes at ohic@ionet.net or 405-942-5276.

Tree Care Issues Conference

November 3, 2004

OSU Botanical Gardens Educational Building, Stillwater

24th Annual Arkansas/Oklahoma Horticulture Industries Show

"Safe and Secure Food Begins on the Farm"

January 14-15, 2005

Fort Smith, Arkansas – Holiday Inn Civic Center

For more information contact Donna Dollins at donna.dollins@okstate.edu or 405-744-6460.

For more information about upcoming events, please contact Stephanie Larimer at 405-744-5404 or steph@okstate.edu.